



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**THRU:** Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager

**FROM:** Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Zach Baumer, Climate Program Manager

**DATE:** May 22, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Community Carbon Footprint Progress Report

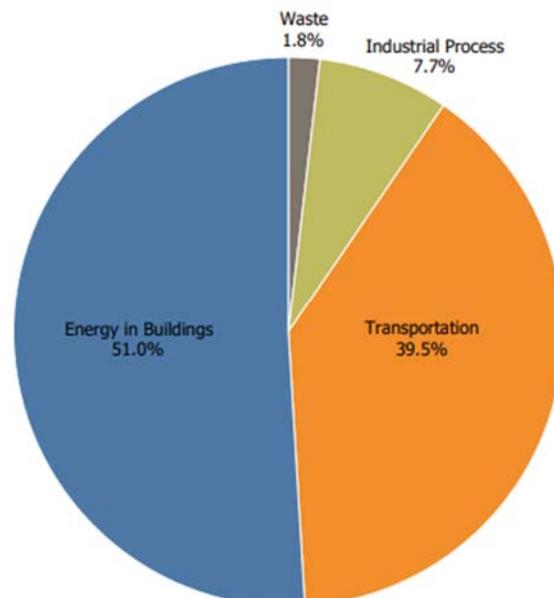
### Background

In 2015, Council approved Resolution 20150604-048, which adopted the Austin Community Climate Plan to achieve **net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**. The net-zero emissions reduction target also aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 outcomes, specifically Council priority metric HE.E.1 (Community Carbon Footprint). The Office of Sustainability continues to track Austin's progress toward the goal of net-zero community-wide emissions by annually calculating the greenhouse gas inventory for Travis County and progress towards the 2020 interim emissions reduction target.

### Community Carbon Footprint

*Our community footprint is going down.*

The most recent available data calculations show the 2017 Travis County greenhouse gas inventory totals 12.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Carbon dioxide equivalence is a simple way to normalize all greenhouse gases and climate influences that contribute to our carbon footprint in standard units. **This is a slight decrease from the 2016 community-wide total, despite a growing population and rising GDP.**



**2017 Travis County Carbon Footprint**  
12.5 million metric tons carbon dioxide-equivalent

**Progress by sector since 2016**

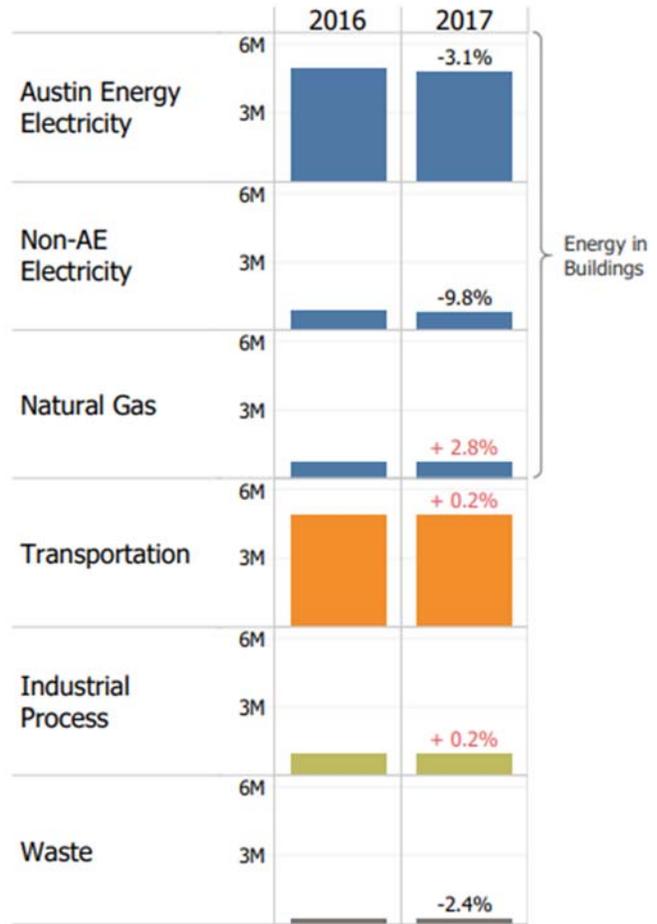
Emissions have *decreased* from the following sources:

Austin Energy customer electricity use.

Austin Energy demand side management programs and increased renewable energy generation contributed to a lower carbon footprint associated with serving Austin Energy load in 2017. Weather patterns, plant operations, and the economics of the ERCOT grid also contribute to the variability in carbon footprint from year to year.

Other regional utilities customer electricity use. The electricity generated across the ERCOT grid also came increasingly from renewables, which resulted in lower emissions.

Waste management. Environmental Protection Agency reporting requirements for emissions from waste in landfills have been revised. Revised calculations from the years 2011 – 2017 show that emissions have significantly decreased over that period.



**Travis County Emissions Sectors**

Comparison between 2016 and 2017 emissions (shown in millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent)

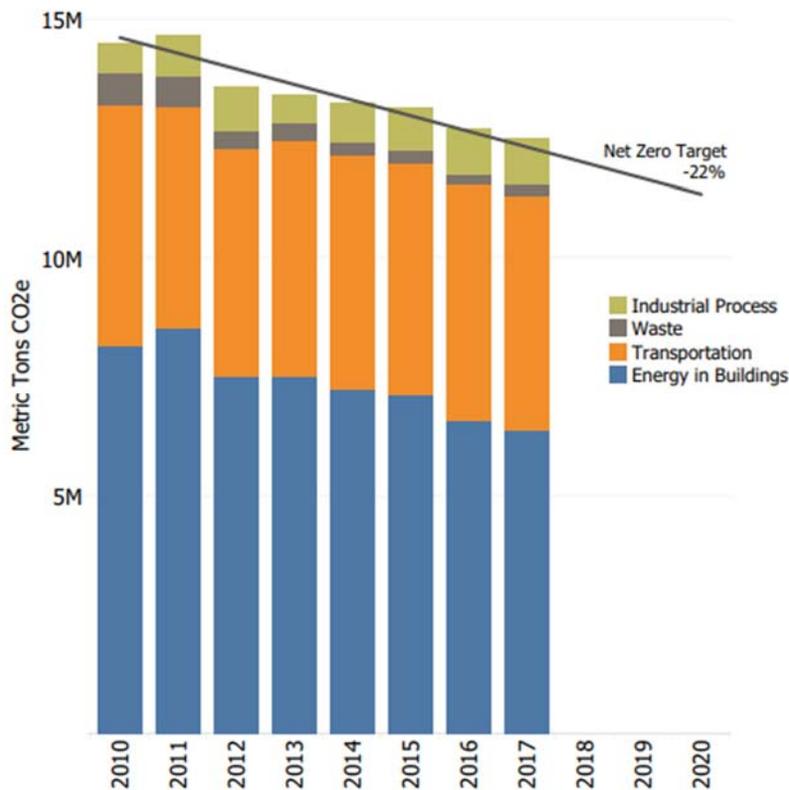
Emissions have *increased* from the following sources:

Transportation. Emissions increased due to population growth that resulted in more cars on the road.

Industrial processes and natural gas. Emissions resulting from industrial processes and stationary combustion both increased slightly, which likely indicates natural variation from year to year rather than substantive changes to the processes themselves.

## Meeting the 2020 Interim Target

The Office of Sustainability, Austin Energy, Austin Transportation, and Austin Resource Recovery currently lead in implementing the majority of actions from the Austin Community Climate Plan. Current projections based on these activities suggest that **Austin will meet the interim emissions reduction target of 11.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2020**. This will largely result from meeting 65 percent of energy needs with renewables by 2027 based on the current Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan. Strategies to reduce emissions from transportation sources and associated land use decisions will be increasingly important to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.



Emissions trends with interim reduction targets for Travis County

## Next Steps

The Austin Community Climate Plan is updated on a five-year cycle with the first update due in 2020. Staff currently expects to kick-off planning for the update later this Fall in collaboration with partner Departments and community stakeholders. The rollout of other plans, including the recently adopted Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and future update to the Austin Energy Generation and Climate Protection Plan, will provide important touchpoints to inform the Community Climate Plan update process. Future memos to Mayor and Council will provide additional details on the timing and process for the Austin Community Climate Plan 2020 update.

**CC:** Spencer Cronk, City Manager